

# Abraham Lincoln

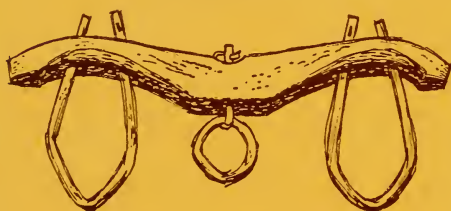
A Story and a Play

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Mary Hazelton Wade

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# ABRAHAM LINCOLN

A STORY AND A PLAY

BY

MARY HAZELTON WADE

Author of the *Little Cousin* books, etc.



RICHARD G. BADGER

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## THE STORY



## THE STORY OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN

**T**HROUGHOUT the United States, boys and girls take delight in celebrating the twelfth of February. It is because on that day the great and good man, Abraham Lincoln, first opened his eyes on this world.

The home to which the baby came was poor and bare. It was a tiny cabin in the state of Kentucky, which was then a rough, unsettled country. Around the cabin were thick woods where wild animals roamed freely. The cry of catamounts and the howling of wolves could be heard in the stillness of the night. Turkeys and deer often ran across the path of the settlers. There were few neighbors, for only brave people were as yet willing to venture so far into the backwoods.

Only a short time before there was constant danger from the Indians, who were likely to attack the white people at any moment. Abraham's own grandfather was killed by one of these

savages while he was busy with his two older sons making a clearing about his home. The youngest son, Thomas, who was afterwards Abraham's father, was playing near them. When their father fell, the older boys ran off to get help, telling Thomas to watch his father's dead body.

As soon as the child was left alone, the Indian, who was hiding near by, saw his chance. Terrible in his war paint, he crept up towards the child and was about to seize him and carry him away, when one of the brothers came hurrying back. Whiz flew a bullet from his rifle! The savage fell dead and the boy was safe.

In this kind of life, so full of danger, the boy Thomas grew up. There was no school where he could learn to read and write. The days were spent out of doors, cutting down the trees of the forest near by, hunting wild animals, and tending the little garden.

When Thomas became a young man he married a girl named Nancy Hanks who had been brought up in better circumstances than he. She had been to school, and though she had always lived in the "backwoods," she had the gentle and beautiful nature of a true lady.

In the new home where she went to live with her husband, the young wife did not have the comforts to which we are used. There were no carpets to spread over the rough unpainted floor and only a few pieces of homemade furniture. The cooking was done before a big fireplace from which the burning logs gave the only light after the sun had set.

After Abraham's sister was born, the family moved to a different place, called Rock Spring Farm. The country around was quite beautiful, and near the cabin, half hidden by a clump of trees and bushes, was a deep spring of clear water. On this farm the little Abraham first saw the light, and here he lived until he was seven years old.

In the woods near by he could watch the squirrels and rabbits at play. There was the spring close at hand with its song of gladness; there were berries to pick and nuts to gather. Yet the little boy must often have been lonely, since he had few playfellows. Then, when night came, there was no cosy, cheerful home with its bright light to welcome him—only a small, dark cabin with its bare walls and floor, and a hard bed under the roof, through whose cracks the rain could

beat down on the child's face below.

Abraham could not have been happy in those days. Afterwards, when he became a man, he seldom spoke of them, even to his dearest friends. There was a small school-house not far from the farm, and here Abraham and his sister learned their a-b-c's. Afterwards, they went for a short time to another school four miles away.

Abraham's father was "easy going" as people say. He liked talking with his friends and dreaming dreams better than hard work. Stories came to him of a richer country in Indiana where he might have a better farm.

"I will go there and look the country over," he said to his wife. It was a long ways off, but as he was a good carpenter he decided to make a flat boat on which he could float down Knob Creek, which was only a short way from his home. Then, moving from one river to another, he would at last reach Indiana.

The boat was soon made and Mr. Lincoln started out on his journey. When he reached the new country he was much pleased, and there, in the midst of a forest, he decided upon the place for a home. He would return at once for his family. He could not float his flatboat up stream,



however. So sold it to a settler near by, and started on foot for Kentucky.

At this time Abraham was seven years old and his sister Sarah was nine. Like all other children, they were probably pleased when their father got back and told of the new home which they were to seek in Indiana. They could not walk all the way, because the country was too rough and wild. But the father got two horses on which the children and their mother rode during the first part of the journey.

Towards the end they travelled in a farm wagon which Mr. Lincoln hired from one of the settlers along the way. At last they reached a stretch of thick forest, and there in its midst they made ready to settle. Winter was near and shelter must be put up at once. Abraham's father set to work and built what is called a half-faced camp. That is, the house had only three sides. The fourth was left open.

There was no floor, neither were there windows or chimney, and the wind and rain were free to beat their way inside. For about a year this was the only home that the family had.

Abraham was tall and strong for his age, and he worked hard, helping his father clear the land

for a farm. From morning till night his long arms were busy felling the trees or ploughing the ground for a garden. When his mother needed meal for making bread, the boy would fill some bags with corn, and then carry it on horseback to the mill seven miles away, to have it ground.

By the end of the year the boy had helped his father make a better home than the poor half-faced camp, but even now there were neither windows nor door nor floor. Soon afterwards Abraham's mother, who had borne so many hardships, suddenly became very ill.

There was no doctor at hand to save her, and she died, leaving her two children with their father to get along as best they could. How deeply Abraham had loved this tender mother, who had already done so much for him! He never forgot her, and whenever he spoke of her afterwards his voice grew soft and tender. He called her his "angel mother."

After she died, Abraham's sister Sarah, who was then only eleven years old, became the housekeeper. She cooked and sewed for her father and brother as best she could. It must have been hard work for the poor child, and she was prob-

ably glad when the next year her father went back to Kentucky, to marry a widow whom he had known in her girlhood.

### SCHOOL DAYS

The new stepmother brought a large wagon-load of furniture and clothing to her Indiana home. One of the pieces was a bureau which had cost fifty dollars. It must have seemed very wonderful to Abraham and Sarah, who had been used to rough homemade furniture all their lives.

When Mrs. Lincoln looked around her new home she said she would not be satisfied until a floor had been laid. The house must also have windows and a door. When these had been attended to, and the furniture set in place, Abraham was more comfortable than he had ever been in his life.

The stepmother had a loving heart, and though she had three children of her own, she treated Abraham and Sarah very kindly and did all she could to make them happy.

"Even if we live in these backwoods, they must have book learning," she declared. "They shall not grow up ignorant."

There was a small schoolhouse not far away, and soon after the stepmother had taken charge of the family, the children began to go to school. There they studied "readin', writin' and cipherin'."

There were few books in the school, and neither paper nor ink, as it was nearly impossible for people living in the midst of the forest to get such things. The school-house itself was small and dark. When the door was closed the only light came through squares of greased paper, which were used instead of glass for windows.

The benches where the children sat were logs split in halves and set up on legs. Yet Abraham was so glad to get a chance to learn, that he was happy during the short time he was able to go to this school. He loved his studies so much, that after working hard on the farm all day, he used every spare minute of the evening reading the few books he was able to borrow from his neighbors, or doing "sums" with bits of charcoal on the wooden fire shovel.

There were no lamps nor candles in the house. The boy, however, would stretch out on the floor before the fireplace, and by the light of the burnings logs, he managed to do his sums and his

reading. Abraham's stepmother soon discovered that he had a bright mind and she encouraged him to study. She loved him dearly, for he was as thoughtful and kindhearted and truthful as he was eager to learn.

"Abe never gave me a cross word or look. I must say Abe was the best boy I ever saw or expect to see," she said afterwards.

When Abraham was fourteen years old he went for a short time to another school, and again when he was nearly seventeen. This last was four or five miles away, but it was better than any of the others. Here the boy had a chance to use pen and ink, and was given a copy-book in which to write.

The teacher had been "out in the world." So, with the other studies, he taught these backwood pupils what he called "manners." He showed them how to enter a room filled with people. He trained the boys in taking off their hats and bowing politely to the girls when they met them.

"How much our teacher knows!" thought the pupils, and though they were awkward, they tried their best to follow the master's directions. When Abraham afterwards left his country home and went to live in a city, he was probably very

glad of the "manners" he learned that winter.

There were other things which he enjoyed greatly in this last school. One of them was the Friday "speaking," when the boys and girls took their turns in standing up before the class and recited the "pieces" they had learned. Then there were compositions. At one time Abraham wrote on "Cruelty to Animals." His tender heart could not bear to have dumb creatures suffer. Still another of his compositions was on "Temperance." One of the neighbors admired this so much that he had it printed in a newspaper.

Abraham never had another chance to attend school. Altogether he spent less than one year in a school-room, yet "between times" he taught himself as best he could, borrowing every neighbor's book he could get.

This borrowing once got him into sad trouble. Abraham was working for a rich man named Crawford. During the day he split rails, ploughed and took care of the cattle. He sometimes helped in the house, too, and even tended the baby for Mrs. Crawford, who was very kind to him and loaned him books, which he read after he went to bed at night.



One evening when Abraham had finished reading, he tucked the book away between the logs in the wall beside his bed, as he usually did when he was ready for sleep. Before morning a storm arose, and he woke up to find the book drenched through from the rain which had made its way through the chinks of the wall.

When he took it back, Mr. Crawford said, "I won't accept such a book. You may keep it, but you must pay for it by pulling fodder." Abraham felt quite bitter that a wealthy man like Mr. Crawford should be so hard upon him, a poor boy. But he set to work, and in three days he earned his first book. It was Weem's "Life of Washington."

For weeks afterwards Abraham spent all his spare time in reading and rereading his precious book. Over and over again he followed Washington through the brave adventures of his youth and the battles in which he dared so much.

While Abraham was poring over the life of the "Father of his Country," the boy little dreamed that he himself would become the wise, "Big Brother." Yes, it would be through his love and foresight that America would be saved, and her people kept together in one great family.

"Robinson Crusoe," "Aesop's Fables," "Pilgrim's Progress" and a "History of the United States" were also great favorites with Abraham. He came to know them almost by heart. Then, of course, there was the Bible, which he had learned to love when a tiny, little fellow. His own mother had often read it to him before he was old enough to study it for himself.

Much as Abraham liked to read, he was also fond of sports. He ran races, he took part in wrestling matches, and when there was a husking-bee or a house-raising, there he was to be found, the merriest, happiest one of the whole company. He was such a big, strong fellow, six feet four inches tall before he was twenty years old, that he could outstrip his fellows in everything he tried.

No one around could chop wood or split rail so fast as Abraham Lincoln. No other man could lift so big a weight as he, or equal him in wrestling. But he was not satisfied with doing these things. He was just as eager to be a fine story teller, to be a clear writer, and to argue so well that everyone who listened would be forced to agree with him. He soon became the wonder of the whole country side, and people would gather



about him whenever they had a chance to listen to his stories and speeches.

Though he went to school for such a short time, and though there were so few books that he could get hold of, yet Abraham was constantly learning in other ways. People from other places passed through the country from time to time, and the boy listened eagerly to their stories.

He would often repeat these stories to himself when he was alone. Then, between his father and his men friends there were talks to which Abraham gave close attention, hoping to learn something he did not already know. Most exciting of all was what he heard at the court-house in the town fifteen miles away. He did not consider the long walk through the woods, but whenever it was possible for him to leave his work for the day, he would set out for the town with long, swinging steps.

When he arrived at the court-house he was sure to be rewarded. Men and women were tried there for wrong-doing, and they were often defended by great lawyers who had come from the cities far away. Abraham listened carefully to the speeches which he stored away in his mind. At such times the log-house in the backwoods, the

hum-drum ploughing and wood chopping were forgotten, for the young fellow was living in thought in the big, outside world.

After such days in court, Abraham could often be seen standing in the middle of the field, when he should have been at work, repeating the speeches he had heard to a crowd of neighbors. So well did he speak, that they, too, forgot the work in hand, and were carried far away from their backwood's home.

Now, in the books Abraham read, and in the talks and speeches he heard, there were words whose meaning he did not know, and expressions that were not clear. Then he was much troubled. He would spend a long time thinking over the matter and trying to understand.

At such times he would say to himself something like this, "Whenever I speak to others, no matter what the subject may be, it shall be said so clearly and simply, that every one will understand me."

He kept his word. In the great speeches he afterwards made—speeches which stirred the hearts of all who heard them and which will live forever, his words were so clear and simple that everyone could understand.

## OUT IN THE WORLD

As Abraham grew up, more and more people came to his part of the country to settle. A village called Gentryville grew up a mile or so from the Lincoln home. In the general store there, Abraham was clerk for a whole winter. Every evening and Saturday afternoons, this store was a gathering-place for all the men of the country side. They talked politics, told stories, and read aloud from the weekly newspapers, so the young clerk learned much at this time about what was going on in the world outside.

Mr. Gentry, the owner of the store, took a great liking to his young clerk, and gave him a chance to see something of that outside world. He loaded a flat boat with corn, flour, bacon and other things raised in the country near by, and gave it into the charge of Abraham and his son Allen. They were to go down the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers and sell the goods to the owners of the plantations where sugar and cotton were raised by negro slaves. He promised Abraham eight dollars a month, besides paying his fare home on a steamboat.

This seemed a large sum of money to the young man; besides, he was glad of the chance

to travel and to see new sights. While Abraham and his friend Allen were away, they had an exciting adventure. One dark night, after they had drawn the flat boat up to the shore to rest till morning, seven negroes made a sudden attack. They meant to kill the young men, and then steal the cargo of goods.

But Abraham and Allen managed to defend themselves, though they were both hurt before they were able to drive off the negroes and get the boat safely out into the middle of the stream.

The money which Abraham earned at this time seemed a large sum to him. But it could not have been so precious as what came to him the year before when he was plying a ferry at Anderson's Creek. One day two men came hurrying down to the landing and engaged Abraham to carry them and their trunks out into the river to meet a passing steamer.

When the work was done and the men were about to step on board the steamer, each one handed him a half-dollar. He could hardly believe his eyes. He was, for the first time, the owner of a whole dollar, and for a small task which had taken less than half a day! It seemed too good to be true.

## A NEW HOME

When Abraham was twenty-one years old, his father decided to move once more. He learned that farther west in Illinois, there was rich prairie land where it would be easy to make a comfortable home. Two other families decided to go with the Lincolns. Heavy ox-carts were loaded with furniture and supplies, and the party started out with hearts full of hope.

Abraham carried with him thirty dollars' worth of "notions," which he sold for such good prices to the settlers along the way, that by the end of the journey he had gained thirty dollars by his sales.

As they travelled along, a small thing happened which showed Abraham's tender heart even for dumb creatures. The party had to cross an icy stream, and when they reached the other side they found that a dog had been left behind. It stood on the shore crying pitifully. Should it be allowed to stay there and starve?

"Indeed not," declared Abraham. He hurriedly drew off his shoes, waded across the stream, and was soon on his way back with the dog under his arm. The poor little creature was now so happy that Lincoln said afterwards he

was more than paid for his trouble.

After Abraham helped the family get settled in the new home, he went on to the village of New Salem, where he became the clerk of a man named Offut. He was so kind and merry and told such good stories, that people liked to come to the store for the sake of talking with him, just as the folks of Gentryville had done. Besides this, they found he was so honest, that they could trust him in the smallest matters.

Now it happened, that one night after Abraham had closed the store, he counted up the money he had received, and found he had six cents too much. He was troubled, and thought about it for a long time. At last he remembered how it must have come about. He had given the wrong change to a certain woman.

He hastened to lock up the store, and started at once for the woman's house three miles away. As soon as he arrived there, he handed her the six cents, telling her he had made a mistake. Then, happy once more, he went home, caring little for the long walk, since he had done what was right. It is not strange that such things as this soon won for him the name of "Honest Abe."



While Abraham was working for Mr. Offut, he was sent on another flat-boat expedition down the Mississippi. He carried bacon, flour and other things raised on the farms near by, and traded them off to the plantations along the river, just as he had done before. This time, however, he travelled as far as New Orleans, where he saw something that seemed very terrible. It was an auction of slaves. Little children were taken from their mothers' arms and sold as so many pieces of furniture. Women were parted from their husbands. The young man was deeply troubled at the sad sight. He said to himself, "In this great and beautiful country of America, it is dreadful that there should be such a thing as slavery."

#### CAPTAIN ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Two years after Abraham went to live in New Salem a war broke out. It was between the white men and their red neighbors. A great chief named Black Hawk entered Illinois with his braves and led them in several terrible massacres against the white people. The settlers fled from their homes in fright, and an army was raised to

rout the Indians.

By this time young Lincoln had become a great favorite in his part of the country, and he was chosen captain of a company of soldiers who had enlisted in the war. He was delighted at the honor, because it showed how much he was liked. He said afterwards that it gave him more pleasure than anything which befell him in later life.

Now it happened that the war came to an end before Lincoln's company was called upon to do any fighting, but the men were in camp for several months, where they were drilled daily and stood ready to fight if called upon. They had much spare time, however, in which they ran races, had jumping and wrestling matches and other sports, and Abraham enjoyed the good-natured companionship of so many young men.

Though they had not gone to the front, and had taken part in no fighting with the red men, they often talked together about the fearful massacres of which they heard. More and more they hated the Indians and felt a longing to destroy them. One day, as some of them were talking together about this very matter, an old Indian, poor and feeble, came walking into the camp.



"A spy!" the soldiers shouted, and they rushed upon him. They felt such hate for all Indians that now, when one of these savages stood in their midst, they were eager to kill him without giving him a chance to speak for himself.

Their frightened prisoner drew out a bit of paper and held it up. It was a pass from General Cass saying the Indian was honest, and a friend of the white men.

"Perhaps General Cass did not write the pass," said one of the soldiers.

They hated the Indians so much, they did not wish to lose the chance of killing one of them now that they had him in their power, so they were quite ready to believe that the pass was not a true one.

"Shoot him!" cried one after another.

Several guns were aimed at the shivering old creature, and in another instant he would have been killed, when suddenly Captain Lincoln stood in front of his men, with stern face and flashing eyes. Rushing between them and the Indian, he cried out:

"Hold on! I command you not to fire." At the same moment he knocked up the guns that

were pointed at the body of the red man. The men were so angry, however, that they were not willing to obey the order of their captain.

"Are you soldiers, and yet willing to kill a poor old man who cannot defend himself? You would bring disgrace upon your country by such a cowardly deed!" cried Lincoln, in ringing tones. His eyes were fairly blazing as he spoke.

"He's a spy!" answered one of the men.

"If it be true," said Lincoln, "he must die. But till it is proved, any one who attempts to kill him, must settle with me. I am ready to fight it out with each one of you. In the meantime, disband."

The men, with deep scowls, lowered their guns and turned away. Lincoln was left alone with the Indian. He examined the pass and saw that it was a true one.

"You are free," he said to the old man. Too grateful to answer in words, the Indian knelt down and kissed the feet of the young captain.

#### AFTER THE WAR

When the Black Hawk War came to an end, Lincoln went back to New Salem, reaching his

home just ten days before the time to elect men for the state legislature.

He was, as we know, a great favorite in the town. "Why not let the people use my name for representative?" he thought. "I shall lose nothing if I fail to be elected."

His many friends were pleased, and when the election day came, all the men in New Salem except three voted for "Abe." The rest of the district, however, favored another man more strongly, and Lincoln lost the election. What should he do now? He had no money and no work. Mr. Offut, who had been a true friend, had failed and given up his business.

"Shall I become a blacksmith or a lawyer?" thought Lincoln. His long, strong arms were well fitted for a blacksmith's trade. But then there was the bright, quick mind which must be kept busy.

"I will be a lawyer," Lincoln finally decided.

Yet he did not know enough to practice law. He must study a great deal before he could carry out his wish, but after much thinking he planned how to bring it about.

"I will keep a store," he said to himself. "There I will have enough spare time to study

law. When I have learned enough, I can be a lawyer."

He got another man named Berry for a partner, and they started out with great hopes. Lincoln had the time he wished for study, and every spare moment was spent poring over some law books he had found in the bottom of a barrel of rubbish, which another man who needed the money had sold him for a half-dollar.

He kept these books close at hand, so that the instant a customer left the store, he could go back to his studies, if only for five or ten minutes. To most people these books would seem very tiresome, but to Lincoln they were wonderfully interesting.

In the meantime the town of New Salem was growing smaller every day, and there were fewer and fewer people to trade at the store. Besides, Mr. Berry showed himself of little worth. In a short time the business failed, and Lincoln found himself with a large debt which it took years to pay. He afterwards laughingly called it his "National Debt."

When the store was given up, Lincoln did any kind of work he could get. Yet he still kept up his study of the law, carrying a book with him

wherever he went, reading as he walked along the street, or whenever he could rest a moment from rail-splitting or farming.

At this time he took great pleasure in reading the plays of William Shakespeare, as well as his law books. One day he received some good news. He had been made a surveyor of lands. It was the very work that George Washington had done so well when a young man. Lincoln was delighted. He was to be paid three dollars a day, and this seemed a large sum.

But he knew little about surveying. What did that matter? He would set to work and learn the business at once. So he went to the schoolmaster, who gave him all the help he needed during the next few weeks to make him a good surveyor. A short time after this he was made postmaster, but the town was so small and there were so few letters, that Lincoln often carried them about in his hat.

### LINCOLN THE LAWYER

Mr. Lincoln was now twenty-five years old. He had been farm hand, rail-splitter, carpenter, clerk, ferryman, soldier, storekeeper, surveyor and

postmaster. Still, down deep in his heart was the longing to be a lawyer, which had been there ever since he was a boy.

He was very poor, and his debt must be paid; yet he would not give up the idea of becoming a lawyer, and a great one, too. And now something happened which was of great help in carrying out his wish. He gained the place in the legislature he had failed to win two years before. It was because not only the people of New Salem, but of all that part of the country, now had faith in "Honest old Abe."

This was the beginning of a new life to the backwoods man. As he took his place in the state house with other law-makers, no one noticed him particularly. He was homely and awkward, with a sad face and a quiet manner. But his mind was full of fire and his heart beat with a steady love of the right. In a little while people would discover that this was no common man, and that a hero was moving among them.

Mr. Lincoln staid in the legislature for eight years. During that time he finished his study of the law and started out in business for himself. He was still very poor, and as people were often slow in seeking help from a new lawyer, he won-

dered how he should manage to pay his way for the first few months.

With a brave heart, however, he decided to try his fortune in Springfield. He travelled there on horseback, carrying his few clothes in two saddle bags. As soon as he reached the city he went to the store of Mr. Speed, one of his friends, and asked him the cost of a bedstead and its furnishings.

"Seventeen dollars," was the answer.

Lincoln replied that though the price might be cheap, he did not have money enough to buy one.

"If you will trust me till Christmas time," he said, "I will pay you then." "That is," he added, "if I succeed as a lawyer."

"But suppose you do not succeed?" Mr. Speed answered.

Lincoln's face became very sad. "If I fail, I don't know when I can pay you." As he spoke his voice was as sorrowful as his face.

"But there is a way out of having any debt at all," his friend now suggested. "I have a large room up stairs with two beds in it. You are welcome to share the room with me."

A moment afterwards Lincoln, armed with his



saddle bags, was on his way up the stairs, as joyful as he had been sad before. Leaving them in the middle of the floor, he ran down again, crying out:

"Well, Speed, I'm moved."

Another friend offered to give him his board free, so he managed to get along till he could earn his own living. It was not long before the people began to praise the wise and clever speeches of the new lawyer. Besides, they honored him for his honesty and kindness. He was unlike many lawyers.

He was not willing to work for a man if he thought him in the wrong. But if he believed that man had been treated unjustly, he did not count the time and thought spent in winning the case. Moreover, he worked just as willingly for a person who was too poor to pay him, as he did for the rich man who could give him a large sum of money. Always and everywhere it was *the right* that interested Abraham Lincoln.

In those days lawyers went about the country to attend court in different places. They usually travelled on horseback, for there were few railroads. On one of these trips Lincoln went with a party of other lawyers. As they entered a



narrow lane they were obliged to go two by two. Lincoln and his friend, Mr. Hardin, happened to be the last ones. Suddenly Lincoln stopped. He had spied two baby birds beside the road. The wind had blown the helpless little creatures out of their nest in some tree top.

In another moment Lincoln had sprung from his horse and was busy hunting about for the nest. Mr. Hardin went on, and catching up with the rest of the party, he told them what his friend was doing. When Lincoln afterwards joined them, they laughed at him, but this did not trouble him in the least.

He only said, "I could not have slept if I had not restored those little birds to their mother."

Though his mind was now busy with hard law problems, his heart was as tender as ever for all helpless creatures, no matter how unimportant they might seem to others.

Children were always very dear to Mr. Lincoln. No matter how busy he might be, he could always take time to help a child who was in trouble. One day he was on the way to his office, when he noticed a little girl standing on the sidewalk in front of her home. She was crying bitterly. He stopped to ask what was the matter.

"I shall miss the train," she sobbed. "The expressman hasn't come for my trunk."

"That is too bad," Lincoln answered, at the same time gently patting her head. "Tell me, my child, where you were going."

"To visit my aunt. And a little frind of mine was to go with me, and I have never been on the cars in my life,—and O dear! my friend is probably at the station waiting for me now."

At this thought she began to cry afresh. Mr. Lincoln's tender heart was touched.

"How big is the trunk?" he asked. "If it isn't *too* big, there is time enough."

As he spoke he made his way up to the door of the house, where the child's mother was standing. She led the way inside and pointed out the trunk. It was a small one. Lincoln lifted it easily to his strong shoulders, at the same time bidding the little girl to wipe her eyes.

"Come, quick, and I guess we can catch the train," he said cheerily.

With the child by his side, he strode down the street. They were still some distance from the station when they heard the train coming.

"Take my hand, little one, we'll get there yet," Lincoln told the child. With the trunk still on his

shoulder, and the girl's tiny hand clasped tightly in his own big, strong one, the station was reached before the train pulled out.

As the young lawyer put his little charge on board, he kissed her good-bye, saying, "Now have a real good time."

Lincoln had not practiced law very long before the best people of Springfield began to invite him to their homes. He was still "poor as a church mouse," but he was so bright and clever, and such a good story teller, that no gathering seemed a success without him.

And so Honest Abe, the backwoods rail-splitter, was now often the manager of a dance, or the chief speaker at a dinner party.

At this time he became acquainted with a Miss Mary Todd, a handsome and witty young girl, who had come from Kentucky to visit her married sister. She chose Mr. Lincoln out of the many young men in Springfield who admired her, and the two were married when Lincoln was thirty-three years old.

He was still so poor that he could not afford to set up house-keeping, so he and his young wife went to board for a while at a cheap tavern, where their food and room together cost only four dol-

lars a week.

The fame of the young lawyer was now growing fast, and more people sought his services every year. The time came when a man was willing to pay five thousand dollars for his help in a single case. How different this was from those first days in Springfield, when Lincoln was satisfied to receive a fee of five dollars.

No matter how large a sum was offered, however, he was never willing to help anyone who seemed to be in the wrong. Nor was he ever too busy to aid those who had been his friends in his early days of sadness and struggle.

In this time of success, he was able to repay the kindness of the Armstrong family who had been good to him when he was a poor clerk in New Salem. Many a time Mrs. Armstrong had been as tender as a mother when he was poor and homeless. And now her son Jack was accused of murder, and the trouble was breaking her heart, Lincoln used his bright mind to defend the fellow. When the trial came, he spoke with such feeling that the hearts of all who listened were deeply touched. More than this,—his wise words proved that young Armstrong was innocent and he was set free.

During the years in which Mr. Lincoln was practicing law, he heard much about slavery. Some of the states believed it to be right, and others declared it was wrong. Lincoln still felt as he did when as a young man he had seen a slave auction in New Orleans. He thought often of the words in the Declaration of Independence, "All men are created equal."

And yet he would say to himself, "Americans hold slaves."

Whenever he spoke of slavery in public he gave such good reasons against it, that all who heard him were moved. Now there was a certain senator of the United States, whom Lincoln had known when he first started out in Springfield as a lawyer. This man, Stephen A. Douglas, had become famous throughout the country, and had won for himself the name of "The Little Giant."

Mr. Douglas believed so strongly that slavery was just, he succeeded in winning the right to own slaves for two states where they had not been held before. Just after he had done this he came back to his old home in Springfield, and made a great speech there defending slavery.

Lincoln answered this speech so well, that he

won the greatest praise for himself. After this Mr. Douglas made other speeches, but every one was followed by a still greater one from Lincoln. It seemed almost laughable when people thought about it; here was this backwoodsman, a man of only a few months' schooling, holding his own against the polished gentleman of fine education. The railsplitter standing up against the "Little Giant!"

A more wonderful thing was yet to happen. The time soon came for Douglas to run again for the United States Senate. And Abraham Lincoln was chosen to run against him! Then it was that Lincoln's friends made plans for a debate between the two men. Seven meetings were taken up with this debate. So nobly did Lincoln speak, so grandly did he stand for right and justice, that the whole country now rang with his praise. He had suddenly become a leader and master of men.

As it happened, however, he was not made senator, but Douglas was again elected. If Lincoln had worked in a certain way, this would not have happened, but he had begun to look ahead. He wished to be chosen President of the United States! To do this, he thought it would be wisest to let Douglas win the election for senator.



He planned rightly, for two years afterwards, in the year 1860, his dream came true.

The rail-splitter, Abraham Lincoln, who had spent less than one year in a school-room, was chosen by the people of the United States to be their next President. The child, born in a rough log cabin, who had lived in his early days in a two-faced camp, had by his own will reached the highest place his country could give him.

Henceforth it was for him to guide, not one small body of men, not one state, but the whole United States. When the news came to Mr. Lincoln, he said quietly, "There's a little woman who would like to hear this. I will go and tell her."

With these words he left his friends and went home to let his wife hear what had happened. Many, many years ago,—when her husband was poor and little known, she had declared that some day he would be President. The people who heard her then must have smiled at the idea.

### LINCOLN THE PRESIDENT

Before Mr. Lincoln left his quiet home for Washington, he went to visit his old stepmother, whom he had always loved dearly. She cried as she bade him good-bye.

"I fear that enemies will take your life," she told him.

She seemed to feel that she would never see this dear stepson again, and Mr. Lincoln himself was overcome with sadness. He could not shake it off for some time.

The White House, the beautiful home for presidents at Washington, was waiting for the Lincoln family, and here they settled themselves after the thundering of cannon and the cheers of the people told the world that Abraham Lincoln was now at the head of the government.

Four baby boys had been born to the Lincolns in Springfield. One of them had died there, but there were still three little sons to enjoy the new life of the big city, and President Lincoln was never so happy as when he could frolic with his boys in the White House gardens. Heavy cares, however, began to press upon him and kept him very busy. There was great trouble in the land. Clouds of war were fast spreading over the blue sky of peace. The question Lincoln had asked himself when a young man must now be settled.

Should there be slaves in the country or not? Some of the states said "No," and others said "Yes," declaring that each state should have the



right to decide for itself.

Lincoln had scarcely time to get used to his new duties before the war burst forth,—a terrible war. Then it was that the new President showed how great he was,—how wise and strong, how loving towards all, whether they believed as he did or not.

No other man in the whole country could have filled his place, for no other had such a great heart and farseeing mind. Night and day he was busy planning how the war might be ended and the country saved. Yet, with the great load of care, he was ever willing to stop and listen to the stories of those who were in trouble.

More than one unhappy woman came to beg for the life of her husband or son who had been sentenced to die. They were never turned away.

"Let the man live and have one more chance," the President would say in one case after another.

"His heart is too tender," people sometimes declared. But they did not know him. When firmness was needed, no one could be more fearless than he. He seemed then to forget everything else in doing his duty.

How he grieved for the soldiers dying in battle, and for the loved ones at home who were

left to grieve for them! His great heart would have been broken over the sorrows of others if his strong will had not turned his thoughts at times to other things.

Because of this he was still able to see the fun in whatever was happening around him. He might be discussing a most serious question with the men who made up his cabinet. Suddenly he would think of a funny story which he would repeat so cleverly, that all were set laughing. Moreover, this very story might make them understand the question which had troubled them better than if they should spend hours in talking seriously about it.

Whenever he could spare the time, President Lincoln would ride out to the hospitals near Washington to visit the sick and wounded soldiers. He had kind and tender words for each, and the sight of his sorrowful face, so full of love for all, gave courage to many a suffering man.

While Lincoln was feeling so strongly for others, a great sorrow came into his own home. His favorite son Willie, a bright, lovable boy, was taken ill and died. It seemed as though the father's heart would break. New lines of sadness came into his face and he never seemed quite

the same afterwards.

After Willie's death President Lincoln tried to comfort himself with his youngest son "Tad," a merry little fellow. No matter how busy his father might be, Tad was allowed to run in and out of the office whenever he wished. Many a time the little boy spent the whole evening there, curling himself up upon the floor when he was tired out, and dropping off to sleep. Then his father would lift the child tenderly in his strong arms and carry him off to bed.

Tad probably had more freedom in the White House than any other President's child since then. The little boy was very fond of a tame goat and once when he was away with his mother, Mr. Lincoln wrote his wife: "Tell dear Tad that poor Nanny Goat is lost, and Mrs. Cuthbert and I are in distress about it. The day you left, Nanny was found resting herself and chewing her little cud on the middle of Tad's bed, but now she is gone. The gardner kept complaining that she destroyed the flowers till it was concluded to bring her down to the White House. This was done, and the second day she disappeared and has not been heard of since. This is the last we know of poor Nanny."

We can thus see that even in the midst of terrible care and worry over his country, President Lincoln found time to interest himself in what was dear to his little boy. The older son Robert was away at this time in college, but after he graduated he came home to take part in the war.

On the first day of January, 1863, President Lincoln signed his name to a very important paper about which he had been thinking for a long time. By this paper all the slaves in the United States were set free. When the news spread that this had been done, the whole country was greatly excited.

Many of President Lincoln's best friends thought he was unwise. They said: "It is too early to set the slaves free."

Afterwards, however, people came to see that it was the best thing possible, and that Lincoln had chosen the right time.

The war raged on and news kept coming to Washington of one terrible battle after another. Sometimes it seemed as though one side would win, and sometimes the other. Then came the hard fight at Gettysburg, when the turning-point was reached.

The end of the war was now in sight. After that battle it was decided that the field where it had taken place should be made into a great cemetery. Soldiers who fell in the war, no matter on what side they had fought, should be buried there.

A day was chosen on which the field of Gettysburg should be dedicated. Thousands of people from different parts of the country gathered there. William Everett, a great orator, was the chief speaker. For two hours the immense gathering before him listened in wonder. The grace of the man, the charm of his voice, the beauty of his words, all moved his listeners deeply, and when the speech came to an end, the applause was tremendous.

At last the people became quiet, and another speaker rose before them. It was President Lincoln, tall, thin, homely, ungraceful. Many of those present had never seen their President before. They were almost shocked at the difference between him and the elegant, polished William Everett. And now Lincoln began to speak.

His manner was awkward, but the first sentence was scarcely finished when there came a change. The eyes of the speaker began to burn

with the fire of deep feeling. His voice became deep and powerful. His manner was no longer lacking in grace. He had forgotten himself in his message.

And his listeners? The words of the speaker were so simple, yet so strong, that they longed to do the bidding of this man who seemed to-day as one sent from God. Yes, their country must have a new birth of freedom and it should be through their unselfish devotion.

It was not strange, therefore, that when the speech came to an end there was no sound in that great gathering. The feeling was too deep. The silence spoke more strongly than the loudest applause could have done.

To-day the world looks upon the Gettysburg Address as one of the greatest speeches ever made. The boys and girls of America take delight in reciting it, and as they do so they think of Abraham Lincoln, the hero, the lover and savior of his country.

On the fourth of March, 1865, Lincoln was again made President, and on that day he made another wonderful speech which will be long remembered. He pled for good will towards all men, whether they had fought for or against their



country, for more tender love toward the sick and sorrowing,—everything, in fact, that might bring about, “a just and lasting peace among ourselves, and with all Nations.”

The clouds of war were now fast scattering and the President had reason to be happy. Through his love and patience and wisdom the country would be saved.

“Take better care of yourself,” his friends kept saying to him. “The times are full of danger. Bad men are everywhere about us, and may work you harm unless you are protected.”

But Lincoln would not heed them. With his great kind heart, he would not let thoughts of enemies enter his mind.

He went in and out of the White House and through the streets of the city as simply as a common workman might have done. Every day hundreds of people sought him, and he received them freely, whether they were friends or strangers.

“If I were to guard against all danger, I should have to shut myself up in an iron box,” he said with a laugh. “And then I could not do my duty as President.”

So, though his friends finally insisted on having a guard to watch daily about the White House,

and a squad of mounted soldiers to follow his carriage whenever he went out to drive, he was still careless about protecting himself in many ways.

The 14th of April was at hand. It was Good Friday, and in the churches that day there were many grateful prayers because of the news of coming peace which had reached the people. President Lincoln was very happy.

In the morning he talked with the men in his cabinet. He said that all anger must be put aside. He himself would take no part in hanging those who had fought against the Union, for the one thought now should be peace.

Robert Lincoln had just came back from the war and his father was able to spend a pleasant hour talking with him about what he had seen. Then came a delightful afternoon when the President took a long drive with his wife. He talked of the quiet, happy life they would have together when his work in Washington should be over. He spoke, too, of his gratitude to the good God who had brought such blessings to the country.

Never had he seemed more full of love towards all men than he did that Good Friday afternoon.



Then came the evening, when with his wife and two friends the President went to the theater. The play had already begun when they entered the box but the band immediately began, "Hail to the Chief," and the audience stood up and cheered.

After that the play went on. Lincoln, cheerful and happy, sat back to enjoy it. He little dreamed that a man, a noted actor, was already drawing near to carry out a deadly plot. The heart of this man was full of hatred for his country and that country's chief. His mind was crazed by liquor. It was almost ten o'clock when, suddenly, a shot was heard in the box where Lincoln was sitting.

A cry rang out through the theater, "He has shot the President," as the great leader's head fell forward and his eyes closed. Those eyes would never look again upon this world, and with the dawn of a new day, the last breath had been drawn by the greatest of all Americans. His work had been done and his country saved.

He might not live to enjoy with his people the peace which he had prayed for so earnestly. He had entered forever into a greater peace where war and hate could have no place. Great was

the sorrow in the land. In the homes of rich and poor, the white man and the black, could be heard the sobs of women and children. Even strong men were not ashamed to weep.

The friend of all creatures, whom God had given to this country in its greatest need, had been suddenly taken away. The booming of the cannons and the tolling of bells could tell but little how great was the loss. The humble rail-splitter, the youth to whom a dollar had once seemed a fortune, had climbed alone, step by step, from the lowland of poverty and ignorance to the very summit of the mountain of progress. He had become a savior and a martyr.

## THE PLAY



# ABRAHAM LINCOLN

## A PLAY

*Lend eye and ear, my children dear;  
I, History, will now bring near  
The one whose wisdom, great and true,  
Did save this land beloved by you.  
Here now the backwoods boy behold,  
Unlettered, rough, but for truth ever bold.*

## SCENE I

Place,—Interior of a log house at Pigeon Creek, Indiana.

Time,—About 1820.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN, HIS STEPMOTHER, and MATILDA, his stepsister. (Lincoln is stretched on the floor, working out a problem on a big wooden shovel with a bit of charcoal. At the same time he is eating his breakfast of corncake. His stepmother and sister are cleaning off the table.)

MATILDA,—Mother, did you hear about the spelling match at the school house?

MOTHER,—No, did the children do well?

MATILDA,—Why, you see, the class was

poorer than usual and one after another failed until the schoolmaster began to get angry. You know he has a terrible temper. He gave out the word, defied. My, but you oughter have heard the way the class went down on that! The first one spelled it, d-e-f-y-e-d, the next said, d-e-f-i-d-e, and so on. But nobody hit it right. "Next, next," the schoolmaster kept saying and he was gittin' madder and madder every minute. At last he began to jump up and down while he shouted, "The school shall not be dismissed till that word is spelled right."

After that he sorter caught his breath and called on Kate Roby. She's an awful pretty girl, you know, and I guess Abe likes her powerful well. My, but she was scared though! She didn't know any better than the rest of us. She began, d-e-f-, and everybody knew by the shape of her mouth she was going to say y.

Just then she happened to look at Abe. He was standing opposite her in the line, and he was grinning. Quick as a wink he lifted his hand up and pointed to his eye. Of course Kate guessed what he wanted to tell her. She went on, and finished without any trouble. I reckon she's thankful to Abe for gettin' her out of her

trouble. And the class, too, for that matter!

MOTHER (smiling),—That is just like Abe, always ready to help someone that is in trouble. (Turning now to Abe, who has been so busy that he didn't hear the conversation.) Abe!

ABE (starting at hearing his name called),—What is it, mother?

MOTHER,—Abe, come, come, take your axe and start for the woodland.

ABE (laying down his charcoal and swallow-the last bit of corn-cake),—Yes, mother. (He jumps up, takes down the ax which hangs against the side of the wall, and with long strides leaves the hut and goes down the path towards the woods.)

MATILDA,—I'm going with Abe, mother. I like to watch him cut down the trees.

MOTHER,—No, you can't go to-day. You must help me. Now don't pout, my child. Those beans should be picked. I have a hundred things to do myself. After the housework is finished, I must sew for the children.

MATILDA (scowling, takes a pail and goes out of the hut, talking to herself),—I don't care. I'm going with Abe, anyway. If I hurry, I can catch up with him yet. (Matilda runs and

catches up with Abe, who is whistling as he strides along. She makes a sudden spring, and lands on her brother's shoulders. Pressing her knees against his back she pulls him down upon the ground. His ax falls and makes a sharp cut in her knee.)

MATILDA (screaming),—Oh, Oh, Oh!

ABE,—Sh! there! there! don't be scared. I'll have it all right in a minute. (He tears off a strip of cloth from his ragged shirt sleeve, and binds it about the girl's knee.)

MATILDA (still crying),—Oh, Oh, Oh!

ABE,—'Tilda, how could you? I am astonished. To think that you should disobey your mother.

MATILDA (rocking herself to and fro),—Oh, Oh, Oh!

ABE (sternly now),—What will you tell mother? How will you explain about getting hurt?

MATILDA,—I'll tell her that I did it with the ax. Isn't that the truth?

ABE,—Yes, Tilda, it is the truth, but it isn't the whole truth. Be a brave girl when you go home. Tell your mother the whole truth, and leave the rest to her.



MATILDA (looking up into her brother's kind but firm face),—Yes, Abe, I reckon you are right. I'll do what you say. (She limps away).

ABE (talking to himself),—Poor Tilda! it is hard to be brave, even in little things. (He sighs.) I must be brave, too, but in a different way. I long for book-learning, and to know the great world far away from this rough home of ours, but I must plod on day after day and keep cheerful for mother's sake. I will be a great man yet, though, unlikely as it seems. I feel it. Yes, I know it.

*Now older grown our hero see,  
A kind and tender heart has he.  
E'en though his life is far from bright  
Yet strong his will is towards the right,  
While deep within is purpose strong  
To rise to greatness and belong  
Among the few, whose deeds shall bring  
The whole wide world to wondering.*

## SCENE TWO

Time,—About 1829.

Place,—Grocery store in Gentryville, a town near Lincoln's home. (A crowd of farmers

about the door.)

FIRST FARMER,—Went huntin' yesterday.

SECOND FARMER,—What d'ye get?

FIRST FARMER,—Two good fat deer and a turkey. The turkey was a buster, I tell ye. My woman got him on the spit bright and early this morning.

SECOND FARMER,—Where d'ye go? Down in that stretch of woods to the south?

FIRST FARMER,—Yes, that's the best huntin' place in these parts now. Plenty of panthers there, too! A panther could have jumped down on me any minute, for it was so dark that I couldn't see my hand in front of my face. I was late gettin' home, and the screams of the critters sent the shivers running down my back.

SECOND FARMER (half to himself),—It's queer that Abe Linkern never goes huntin'. He'd be a good one at it, too! A surer hand I never knew.

THIRD FARMER,—Did ye ever hear that story about him when he was a little feller?

(The men gather round and speak together.)

No, what is it?

THIRD FARMER,—Why, ye see, it was this way. He was in the cabin and happened to look

out just as a flock of turkeys was comin' into sight. Quick as a flash he run to the wall and took down his father's rifle. Then he run over to a big crack in the logs. Steady now! He took good aim. Crack goes the rifle, and down falls the best bird in the whole flock. Ye'd a thought that with such a beginning he'd a took to huntin' with a zest.

FOURTH FARMER,—No, no, he's too soft-hearted. Can't bear to make even a dumb critter suffer. He'll wrastle with the best of us, and beat us every time when it comes to splittin' rails or cuttin' logs. But huntin' don't seem to be in his dictionary.

FIRST FARMER,—I saw him do a stunt this very mornin'. Three of us was gettin' ready to move a chicken house. We was all takin' long breaths before the start, for it weighed three hundred or more. 'Long comes Abe just about that time. "What are ye waiting fer?" says he. "Waiting fer?" says I. "We're only gettin' ready." At that he give a long chuckle down in his throat, stepped over to the chicken house, lifted it like it was a feather, and walked off with it. He's a tough one, I tell ye.

THE CROWD,—Ha, ha, ha! Good for Abe!

THIRD FARMER,—That's no better than I see him do last week. My neighbor an' I had some posts to move. They was so big, we couldn't budge 'em. "Fetch some sticks," says I, "and call those men over in that field to come and help us." Then along comes Abe. "What's the matter, boys?" says he, laughing like. "Show me where you want them posts." I pointed out the places. With that, he lifts one of the logs up on to his shoulder, easy like, and walks off with it. An' he kep' on till the last one was moved.

(John Baldwin, the blacksmith, enters the store.)

BALDWIN,—Did you hear about Abe and that drunken feller the other night?

FIRST FARMER,—Yes, Dave told me.

THE REST,—No, tell us.

BALDWIN,—Why, Dave and Abe had been threshin' wheat all day, and in the evening they stopped here on their way home. They stayed till it was pretty late. Then they started off down through that lonely stretch of country. They had gone quite a spell, when Abe says, sudden like, "What's that?" and he pointed to a heap lyin' side of a mud puddle.

The two went up and found that it was a man they both knew,—a good fellow, too, but somehow or other, he'd been and got drunk. There he lay still as death,—didn't know it even when they rolled him over. "He can't stay here," sez Abe. "The night's too cold, and he might freeze before morning."

"Let him lay in the bed that he's made for himself," sez the other, "I'm going home."

But Abe wouldn't hear to it. Leave a helpless man there to freeze to death! That warn't in Abe's makeup. Without saying anythin' more, he bent over and lifted the man up with them long arms of his, and started off with him. He didn't drop him, either, till he reached Dennis Hanks' cabin. Then he built a fire, and set to work rubbin' and warmin' the man up. It was mornin' before he dared to leave him alone. I'm proud to call Abe Linkern a friend of mine.

THE CROWD,—Three cheers for honest Abe! Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!

FIRST FARMER,—How the women folks do like the rail splitter! They say he's the handiest man they ever see. Allus ready to help, from bringing in a pile of wood to rockin' a baby. An' then he's so honest! He wouldn't cheat a

chicken out of a pin feather.

SECOND FARMER,—I reckon they like him all the better because he never touches strong drink. Ye can't get him to. Tain't cause he ain't got spirit, neither. He just *won't* and that's all there is to it.

THIRD FARMER,—He's got some queer notions, Abe has. He says that he is goin' to be President of these here U-nited States. Solemn as an owl about it, too!

FOURTH FARMER,—They might go better and fare worse. Abe's got a powerful long head on them young shoulders.

THE CROWD,—Thet he has.

FIRST FARMER,—There he comes now (calling to him.) Hurry up, Abe, we want one of your stories to warm us up this cold night.

(One after another, as Abe appears.) Evenin', Abe.

FIRST FARMER,—Heerd you was playing speaker down in Crawford's field the other day, Abe. They say as how everybody stopped and gathered round to hear you take off the law argiments that ye heerd down to the county seat. Then old Crawford came out and sent the workmen about their business.



THE CROWD,—Ha, Ha, Ha!

(Lincoln rolls his eyes and makes up a face.)

SECOND FARMER,—Let's have thet song o' yours about Crawford's blue nose. An' don't leave out a single pimple on the ugly old stub.

THE CROWD,—Ha, Ha, Ha!

ABE (smiling), — I reckon Crawford would give me his life of Washington if he could change that nose. It was a bad thing for him when he made me work three days for him to pay for that book I had borrowed. To be sure it was hurt a good deal in the rain that beat in through the rafters by my bed, but I *meant* to be careful of it.

BALDWIN,—But a song! not the one about Crawford,—you've sung that enough; let's have the one about Jackson. We're all Jackson men here to-night.

(Lincoln sings in a queer cracked voice.)

“Let auld acquaintance be forgot  
And never brought to mind  
And Jackson be our President  
And Adams left behind.”

SECOND FARMER,—Let's have “Poor Old Ned,” Abe. You can do that better. (Laughter

again, for everyone knows that Abe cannot keep to a tune.)

ABE,—

“There was an old darky  
And his name was Ned—

(Captain Larkin, a little fat man, and a great boaster, enters the store.)

LARKINS (in a blustering voice),—Fellers, I’ve got the fastest and best horse in this here town.

The men laugh.

LARKINS,—I tell ye, I have the best and fastest horse in this here town. (He sees Lincoln winking at his friends. He steps up in front of him and shouts in a loud voice) :

I have the best horse in this country. I ran him three miles in nine minutes, and he never drew a *long* breath.

ABE (looking at him),—Well, Larkins, why don’t you tell us how many *short* breaths he drew?

The crowd laughs.

LARKINS (doubling up his fists and jumping around),—I’d fight you, Abe Lincoln, if you wasn’t so all-fired big.



ABE (very quietly), — Now, Larkins, if you don't keep still, I'll throw you into that water.

(Larkins gets red in the face and slinks out of the store.)

Abe turns to one of his friends and speaks in a low voice. I'm going to cut work and go over to the county seat again to-morrow, for court is going on there. I'm bound to be a lawyer, Ben, and a great one. After that, who knows what will happen?

(His friend smiles.)

LINCOLN,—It seems funny, does it? Abe Lincoln, the rail splitter, one of the big men of this country! Well, watch and see, old man.

(He taps his friend on the shoulder and goes out.)

*Years have passed by; the backwoods boy  
Has grown to manhood, now, forsooth,  
No longer poor, with fame unearned,  
But Lincoln the lawyer, great and learned,  
Wise in his craft, given honor and praise,  
Yet never forgetting the friends of old days.*

### SCENE THREE

Time,—1858.

Place,—A court room in Beardstown, Illinois.

Judge, jury, Lawyer Lincoln, William Armstrong, accused of murder, witnesses, crowd of on-lookers.

CROWD (excitedly talking together),—Guilty! Guilty! Guilty!

MAN IN THE CROWD,—Look at Armstrong's face. He turns away his eyes. Of course he is guilty.

SECOND MAN,—But as one of the witnesses shows, Metzger might have been hit by the yoke on his oxen. That is, if he got in the way and stumbled.

CROWD (laughing),—Ha, ha, ha! But the last witness! Of course he is guilty.

JUDGE,—Order! Will the court please come to order? William Armstrong, you may speak in your own defense.

ARMSTRONG (speaking to the judge),—I am charged with a terrible deed. I am innocent, sir, indeed I am. It is true that I struck Metzger in anger. I struck him with my fist. But the blow was not a hard one. It did not harm. I am sure of it.

CROWD (jeering),—Guilty! Guilty! Guilty!

JUDGE,—Let the last witness speak.

WITNESS,—I saw Armstrong and Metzger

when they were quarrelling together that last night. Armstrong pounded Metzger in the face with a sling shot which he had prepared with great care. That settled Metzger.

LINCOLN,—At what time did this happen?

WITNESS,—About eleven o'clock at night.

LINCOLN,—How could you see so clearly at that time of night?

WITNESS (promptly),—By the light of the moon.

LINCOLN,—Was there light enough to see everything that happened?

WITNESS,—The moon was about in the same place as the sun would be at ten o'clock in the morning, and nearly full.

LINCOLN (turning to an officer of the court),—Bring me an almanac.

OFFICER (coming forward and placing an almanac in Lincoln's hand),—Here it is, sir.

LINCOLN (opening the almanac and speaking very slowly),—This almanac shows that at the time you speak, the moon was not shining. There was utter darkness. What you have said, then, cannot be true.

CROWD (excitedly), — Innocent! Innocent! poor boy! Of course he's innocent.

LINCOLN,—Gentlemen of the jury, I came here to-day to defend this young man, William Armstrong, not for pay, but because I owe a great debt to his parents. They were kind to me when I was poor, and had but few friends. The father of this boy who has been unjustly accused, has gone to his long rest. His mother, now a weak, gray-haired old woman, is broken down with sorrow. But, years ago, when young and happy, these two welcomed me to their humble log cabin. They were poor, but they gladly shared what they had with the homeless boy who came to their door. They were father and mother to me. Now it is my privilege to plead for the life of their own son, whom I once rocked in his cradle while his gentle mother mended my ragged clothing.

Gentlemen of the jury, think of this poor boy's mother. Think also how young he is, and how unjustly he has been accused. Decide this case as you think it right and just, bearing in mind, that by this almanac, the words of the last witness are proved to be untrue.

(The jury wipe tears from their eyes. Sobs are heard in the crowd.)

JUDGE (turning to the jury),—Gentlemen,

you have heard the case. We wait for your decision.

(The jury go out of the room, but return very shortly.)

JUDGE (speaking to the jury),—Gentlemen of the jury, what is your decision?

FOREMAN OF THE JURY (handing paper to the judge),—Guilty, or not guilty?

JUDGE (reading the paper),—Not guilty! Release the prisoner at the bar.

(The crowd rises. Talking together and laughing, they leave the court-room.)

Hannah Armstrong, the boy's mother, enters by another door, shaking with excitement, and rushes towards Lincoln, after the jury have all shaken hands with her.

LINCOLN (tears running down his cheeks),—Hannah, what did I tell you? The boy is as free as I said that he should be, and I pray to God that he may be a good boy hereafter, and that this may prove in the end to be a good lesson to him and to others.

HANNAH,—May God reward you as you deserve, Mr. Lincoln. You have a great heart, as well as a wise head. May you live to do great deeds for your country.

*War, fierce and bitter, sweeps our land,  
Death and disaster's on every hand,  
But Lincoln, now our President,  
Shows wisdom great and calm judgment,  
While even now, though cares of state  
Bow down his mind with heavy weight,  
His heart with pitying love takes heed  
Of everyone who is in need.*

## SCENE FOUR

Time,—1861, during the great Civil War.

Place,—Guard house at Chain Bridge Camp,  
near Washington, D. C.

William Scott, a "Green Mountain" boy, who  
has been sentenced to die the next morning for  
going to sleep while on duty.

(The boy looks very sad. His head is bent  
over as he sits thinking. A medal, with Lincoln's  
face engraved on it, hangs from his neck.)

He looks down at it and speaks softly to him-  
self,—He was once a poor country boy like me,  
with work so hard that it would have broken the  
spirit of any other fellow. But he was always  
brave, always kind and thoughtful. And with  
it all, they say he had one thought. He was to



be a great man some day. He never lost sight of that. And now he is a great man, but it has not made him proud. How sad his face is! It is as though he were always thinking of the suffering he longs to help.

(Lincoln enters and walks up to his side.)

LINCOLN (gently),—My dear boy, I have come to see you. I hear that you are one of our Green Mountain boys.

SCOTT (in a frightened whisper),—Yes, sir.

LINCOLN,—Tell me about your home, my boy; are you a farmer's son?

SCOTT,—Yes, sir.

LINCOLN,—And how did you spend your days in your Green Mountain home?

SCOTT,—When I wasn't at school, I helped my father on the farm. I was up with the sun in the morning, and was busy until it set. Then supper, and off to bed, for I would be so tired and sleepy that I couldn't keep awake another minute.

LINCOLN,—Have you a mother, my boy?

SCOTT,—Yes, sir; and I love her very dearly. Here is her picture.

(The boy's voice chokes as he takes a picture out of his bosom and shows it to Lincoln.)

LINCOLN (looking at the picture and speaking very softly),—How glad you must be that your mother is still living! If I were in your place, I would try to make your mother proud of you. Never give her cause to be sorrowful, my dear boy. Never let her shed one tear on your account.

SCOTT (aside),—Why does the President speak in this way to me, when he must know that I am to die to-morrow? Ah! It is because he is so kind. (Looking up into the President's face.) Sir, I do not feel guilty. I did my best. Truly I did. It happened this way. One of my mates was on picket duty for the night. But he was so ill that he was not fit for it. "I will take your place," I told him. It was hard work, for I was not used to it, keeping awake all night. You see, mother didn't want me to go into the war, anyway. She said I was too young. But, sir, I did my duty on guard that night and did not close my eyes once.

LINCOLN (tenderly),—Then what happened, my boy?

SCOTT,—The very next day, I was ordered on guard for the night. I tried my best, sir, indeed I did. But I couldn't keep awake, and went to



sleep while I was walking back and forth. The other guard found me asleep at my post, and you know the rest. (The boy hesitates, and then goes on.) I want to ask you a favor, sir. Can you fix it up so that the firing party who are to shoot me to-morrow morning shall be picked from another regiment? It would be very hard to die at the hand of one's own comrades.

LINCOLN,—My boy, stand up and look me in the face.

(Scott does so.)

LINCOLN,—My boy, you are not going to be shot to-morrow morning. I believe you when you say that you could not keep awake. I am going to trust you and send you back to your regiment. But I have been put to a great deal of trouble on your account. I have had to come up here from Washington when I have a great deal to do; what I want to know is, how are you going to pay my bill?

SCOTT (with a choking voice),—I—I—I am grateful, Mr. Lincoln. I hope that I am as grateful to you as a man should be for saving my life. But it comes upon me sudden. I didn't lay out for it at all. There must be some way to pay you, and I will find it out after a while.

There is the bounty in the savings bank. Then, too, I guess I could borrow some money on the mortgage of the farm. There is my pay, and I am sure that if you can wait till pay-day the boys will help me out. We could do it if it isn't more than five or six hundred dollars.

LINCOLN,—But it is a great deal more than that, my boy.

SCOTT,—Then I don't see now how it can be done, sir, but I am sure that I can find a way if I live.

LINCOLN (putting his hands on Scott's shoulders and speaking sorrowfully),—My boy, my bill is a very large one. Your friends cannot pay it, nor your bounty, nor the farm, nor your comrades. Only one man in all the world can pay it, and his name is William Scott. If from this day, William Scott does his duty, so that, if I were there when he comes to die, he could look me in the face as he does now, and say, "I have kept my promise, and I have done my duty as a soldier," then my debt will be paid. Will you make that promise and try to keep it?

SCOTT,—I will make that promise, and with God's help I will keep it.

LINCOLN (solemnly),—May God bless you.

I believe that, with his help, you will do your duty. I shall not forget you, my boy. Good-bye.

*Still raging is the cruel war,  
Thousands are slain, from near and far  
Comes news of battle, and the air  
With grief is fraught, and heavy care.  
Our President with sorrow's bowed,  
While still his hope and faith speak loud:  
Victory will come, the storm pass by,  
Light will appear, for God is nigh.*

## SCENE FIVE

Time,—1863, during the great Civil War.

Scene,—War office in Washington.

(Two telegraph operators sitting by their instruments, papers beside them.)

OFFICER (entering hurriedly),—Any news?

FIRST OPERATOR,—Yes. (Hands him a telegram).

OFFICER (reading), — Battle still raging around Gettysburg. Great loss of life on both sides. Confederates pressing on.

(Half to himself),—Please God that things take a turn in our favor. They have looked black enough for us lately.

(Second officer entering),—I hope that there is good news this morning. Old Abe has been feeling terribly discouraged, though he is still ever ready with his jokes. We must have a victory, or the country will be lost. What's this? (Reads telegram that first officer has handed him.) This can't be all. There must have been more fighting to-day. See (points to a map on the table), we have just learned from a prisoner caught this morning that Lee is pushing ahead only a part of his army. He has no idea of the number of our men behind these hills. May God grant that General Mead will use his chance.

FIRST OFFICER,—Old Abe is counting so much on him.

FIRST OPERATOR (who has been busy telegraphing, jumps up and cries),—Lines cut again, sir.

FIRST OFFICER,—But the lines are guarded.

OPERATOR,—Not in Washington, sir. I was just sending a message to Secretary Seward, and the lines have been cut not four blocks away.

SECOND OFFICER (rings a bell and a sergeant appears), turning to him,—Send men to find the cut in the line to Seward's office. Quick!

SERGEANT,—Yes, sir. (Goes out.)

SECOND OFFICER (in a low voice to first officer),—There are traitors right here in the city. The President must be guarded, but he must not know of the danger. Sh-h.

(President Lincoln, entering),—Good morning, gentlemen.

(Officers salute him.)

Lincoln walks over to the table and picking up the first of the telegrams, smiles. Listen to this, gentlemen. (Reads aloud). Massa Lincoln, my boy, Jim, done run away to fight in this cruel war. Please send him home. Aunt Chloe.

Officers laugh.

LINCOLN, talking on, as he glances at one telegram after another,—I have just come from a lively talk with one of my advisers. (Laughs and looks keenly from one officer to the other.)

FIRST OFFICER,—Yes?

LINCOLN,—You see, he blames me for being too soft-hearted. Too many pardons, he declares. The soldiers aren't held up to their duty. If they get scared and run from danger, they think that a word from me will save them. Well, my good friend had worked himself into a rage when he came to me, but bless you, he went away smiling.

FIRST OFFICER,—How did you bring it about?

LINCOLN (with a drawl in his voice and a twinkle in his eye),—Perhaps you never heard of the farmer who was troubled by a big log in the middle of his field?

(The officers shake their heads.)

LINCOLN,—Well, one day the old fellow told his neighbor that he had got rid of it. "But how did you do it?" asked the man. "It was too knotty to split, too wet and soggy to burn." "Now, I'll tell ye," said the farmer, "if you will promise to keep it a secret." (The man promised.) Then the farmer said very solemnly, "I ploughed around it."

Now that is just what I did, gentlemen. I ploughed around my good friend, but it took me two hours of good hard work.

Officers laugh, and Lincoln goes on reading the telegrams. Suddenly he looks up and begins to speak again.—Gentlemen, it has been looking pretty black lately, hasn't it?

(Officers bow.)

But I have a great hope. We shall hear good news shortly. I am sure of it. I had the same dream last night that has come to me before when great things were to happen. It was this



(he speaks almost in a whisper): I was in a strange ship that I cannot describe, and I was moving fast, very fast, towards a dark shore beyond. (Lincoln sighs, and then goes on.) That was all,—but, gentlemen, it means good news, great news.

FIRST OPERATOR (excitedly holding out a telegram he has just been taking down),—Mr. President, read this, please.

LINCOLN (reads aloud),—Gettysburg, President Abraham Lincoln, A three days' fight is over. Great loss of life, but victory is with us. Enemy in full flight. Scout A.

LINCOLN,—Praise to the good God. (He buries his face in his hands.)

*The sky at last begins to clear,  
No longer is great cause to fear  
That North and South divided be.  
Our President the end can see  
Of cruel war; his hope is high,  
His heart grows merry; though death be nigh  
He knows it not. Then, suddenly,  
He meets his end most cruelly.*

#### SCENE SIX

Time, Ten o'clock in the evening, April 14,  
1865.

Scene,—A street in Washington.

Two officers walking together.

FIRST OFFICER,—How much we have to be thankful for! The end of the war is in sight. We can draw a long breath at last.

SECOND OFFICER,—Yes, and we may bless God for the one who has brought us safely through such terrible dangers. No other than Old Abe would have been wise enough to do it. He was sent to us in our great need.

FIRST OFFICER,—I believe it. They say that even when he was a backwoods boy, he talked of being President some day. He was determined to be a great man. But when he became great, did it make him proud? No, it made him eager to use his power in helping others. Such a big, tender heart I never knew.

SECOND OFFICER,—I heard that he seemed unusually happy to-day,—went driving with his wife in the afternoon, and this evening is at the theatre with her and a party of friends.

FIRST OFFICER,—Perhaps his dream had something to do with it. Do you remember the day we heard of the success at Gettysburg, and his telling us of the dream he had the night before? I heard that he had the same one last



night, and that he said it meant more good news. No doubt he was thinking of the end of the war.

SECOND OFFICER,—I hope with all my heart that the dream comes true, and that President Lincoln will live long to enjoy the peace for which he has worked so hard.

(At this point a man comes running towards the two officers, shouting.)

Shot! Shot! President Lincoln has been shot!

Crowd gathers from all directions.

FIRST OFFICER (excitedly),—Shot! what do you mean?

MAN (still shouting),—Shot by a crazy actor in Ford's theatre, and there is no hope!

The two officers force their way through the crowd as they hurry down the street in the direction of the theatre.

OLD NEGRO WOMAN (screaming), — Massa Linkum, good Massa Linkum! De Lord neber let such harm come to de Savior of dis people! No! No! No!

Women in the crowd begin to sob.

NEWCOMER, (joining the crowd),—Yes, it is true. There is no hope. The Friend of his people is sinking fast. The doctors believe that he

will not last till morning.

VOICE FROM THE CROWD,—No hope!

ONE AFTER ANOTHER, — No hope! No hope!

OLD MAN,—What will become of the country now?

MAN (who brought the news that Lincoln was sinking),—Our President has saved the country, but he has lost his life in doing it.

ONE OF THE CROWD,—To the White House, to hear all we can.

(He hurries away, and the others follow.)







